

FAIRMOUNT HOTEL  
857 E. Commerce Street  
San Antonio  
Bexar County  
Texas

HABS No. TX-3310

HABS  
TEX  
15-SANT,  
38

PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Rocky Mountain Regional Office  
Department of the Interior  
P. O. Box 25287  
Denver, Colorado 80225

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

FAIRMOUNT HOTEL

HABS No. TX-3310

Location: 857 East Commerce Street (northwest corner of East Commerce and Bowie Streets), San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas. N.B.C. 1010, Lots 24 and 25.

USGS San Antonio East Quadrangle, Universal  
Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 14.0550180.3254730.

Present Owner: La Plaza del Rio Associates.

Present Use: Vacant.

Significance: The Fairmount Hotel is an example of the type of commercial establishments that characterized the prosperity of turn of the century San Antonio. Designed by architect Leo M. J. Dielmann and built by noted contractor, J. P. Haynes, the Fairmount Hotel was typical of the buildings that once lined Commerce Street from downtown east to the Southern Pacific Depot (now the Amtrak terminal). It is sensitively detailed and built of fine local building materials.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection: 1906
2. Architect: Leo M. J. Dielmann. Dielmann was born in San Antonio, Texas on August 14, 1881 to a prominent Southwest Texas family. He attended St. Mary's College (San Antonio), graduating in 1898. Afterwards, he traveled in Europe studying architecture and engineering. After returning to San Antonio, he practiced architecture and actively worked in general construction, serving for several years as president of the Dielmann Construction Company.

In addition to private practice, Dielmann served as City Building Inspector from 1909 to 1912. He also served as Alderman-at-Large from 1913-1914. Architect Dielmann designed or contributed to many of San Antonio's notable structures. These include: The Army Post Chapel at Fort Sam Houston, (dedicated by President Howard Taft); the Science Hall, Conventual Chapel and other buildings at Our Lady of the Lake College; Sacred Heart Church; the remodeling of the Mission San Juan Capistrano and the Mission de la Espada; the rectory at San Fernando Church; the Pearl Brewery; the Steves Sash and Door Company Building; the Koehler Residence; the Courand Residence; the Joske's Brother's Company Store; the Tips Building and the LaCoste National Bank.

3. Original and Subsequent Owners: The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure stands. Reference is to the Clerk's Office of the County of Bexar, Texas.

- 1906 Deed of Trust, July 30, 1906, Volume 254, page 332.  
Veronica Felix  
To  
Theodore Saur (W.A. Wurzbach, Trustee) for a five year loan of \$21,000.00 (\$18,225.00 to J. P. Haynes, \$2,775.00 to T. Saur).
- 1906 Affidavit by Benjamin Sacherer, August 18, 1906, Volume 255, page 247. Attesting that Theodore Felix died without a will, leaving as his heirs his wife, Veronica and his children Theodore, Lillie, Maria, Edward, Eugene, Alois, and Adele.
- 1914 Deed, March 30, 1914, Volume 436, page 504.  
Theodore Felix (son), William Rex and Lillie Rex (daughter), J. H. Bauman and Marie J. Bauman (daughter), Edward and Adele Felix Crouch (daughter), and Edward Felix (son)  
To  
Veronica Felix
- 1914 Deed of Trust, March 30, 1914, Volume 436, page 507,  
Veronica Felix  
To  
The Grand Lodge of the Order of the Son's of Hermann (W. A. Wurzbach, Trustee) for a two-year loan of \$15,000.
- 1915 Deed, March 9, 1915, Volume 453, page 433.  
Veronica Felix  
To  
George C. Saur
- 1928 Deed, June 2, 1928, Volume 1040, page 62.  
George C. Saur, Louis Saur, and Louise Piper  
To  
Alfred C. Cicchese
- 1931 Deed, Probate No. 18,217, March 19, 1931, Volume 1231, page 513.  
George C. Saur, Louis Saur, and Louise Piper regain property by "foreclosure" following death of Alfred C. Cicchese and non payment of loan to George C. Saur, et al.

- 1931 Deed of Trust, May 6, 1931, Volume 1254, page 25.  
George C. Saur, et. al.  
To  
The Grand Lodge of the Son's of Hermann (Gilbert  
H. Scholl, Trustee) for a five year loan of \$15,000.00.
- 1944 Deed, September 20, 1944, Volume 2089, page 60.  
George C. Saur, et. al. with lien for one note of  
\$10,000.00  
To  
Julius Kelfer and Max Kelfer.
- 1945 Deed, January 25, 1945, Volume 2103, page 456.  
Trustee Louise R. Saur  
To  
Julius Kelfer, et. al.  
Release of Liens
- 1969 Deed, September 26, 1969, Volume 6733, page 583.  
Julius and Mina Kelfer and Oscar and Ruth Kelfer  
To  
William R. Sinkin.
- 1969 Deed, October 9, 1970, Volume 6431, page 451.  
William R. Sinkin  
To  
Joske's Brothers Company.
- 1983 Deed, May 23, 1984, Volume 3114, page 1360,  
Allied Stores of Texas, Inc.  
To  
La Plaza del Rio Associates
4. Builder: J. P. Haynes, General Contractor
5. Original plans and construction: No original drawings or plans have been located. An earlier photograph indicates that there was a two-story porch of cast iron on the front that wrapped around the corner one bay to the north on the east facade and another two-story porch across the rear of the building.
6. Alterations and Additions: At undetermined dates, the porches, front and rear, were removed. The Commerce Street ground level store front was replaced with steel and glass, the cast iron columns were covered with stucco and "Vitrilite" glass, and an aluminum canopy was installed. A fire escape was also added on the rear.

B. Historical Context

The Fairmount Hotel was built in response to the prosperity that came to San Antonio as the center of commerce for the southwestern portion of the State. Its upper floors served as temporary quarters for guests until the Depression when it became more of a boarding house for permanent residents. The lower floor housed a variety of commercial and retail businesses throughout its life. Both parts of the building have been vacant since the late 1960's.

Prepared by:  
Bobby Michael McGlone and  
Irby Hightower  
Alamo Architects  
September 1984

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: Built midway between downtown and the Southern Pacific Railroad Depot (now Amtrak), this moderate size hotel and business structure characterizes the type building that lined the streets of early twentieth century Texas towns and cities. With its finely detailed brick work and stone trim it is a fine example of the commercial buildings in San Antonio of that period.
2. Condition of the fabric: The exterior brick masonry is sound, the majority of the windows are missing, the roof is in fair to poor condition. The interiors have been neglected.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: The three story building has a full unfinished basement. The building is rectangular in shape 64'-2" across by 84'-3". There is a two story, off center light well 8'0" x 50'0". The front facade is divided into two equal large bays on either side of a smaller central bay. The east facade is made up of one bay similar to the large front bays and five equal bays of lesser detail.
2. Foundations: Brick masonry bearing walls are 2 feet thick, brick masonry piers 2'6" x 2'6" support cast iron columns above.

3. Wall construction: The exterior walls are of hard pressed red brick on the south and east elevations and tan-buff brick on the north, east and light well elevations. The thickness of walls decreases from the basement to the upper floors. Brick pilasters rest on a corbelled dentil belt course at the second floor level. Pilasters on the south elevation are terminated with limestone capitals supporting flat rowlock segmental arches, each with a projected limestone keystone. The panels above the arches are of rusticated brick. Mortar joints are  $\frac{1}{4}$ " typically.
4. Structural System; framing
  - a. First Floor: Wood girders, built-up of 2 x 14's and 2" x 11" wood joists 18" on center rest on masonry piers. Cast iron angles and built-up girders reinforce the cast iron columns supporting the skylight.
  - b. Second Floor: Wood girders and floor joists of similar dimensions to the first floor are supported by cast iron columns. The light well is supported by cast iron columns at 10'-0" on center along its length with cast iron built-up girders. Interior partitions are of load bearing wood studs.
  - c. Third Floor: Wood stud partitions are supported by 2" x 11" joists at 16" and 18" on center.
  - d. Roof: Flat wood trusses of 2 x 8 and 2 x 4 material vary in depth from 3'-0" in the front to 1'-6" in the rear of the building. Roof decking is 1 x 4 wood, tongue and groove.
5. Chimneys: One 2' x 2' brick masonry chimney rises from the basement through the building at the rear of the light well.
6. Openings
  - a. Doorways and doors: The two entrances on the south facade to the ground floor have been removed (identifiable by the pressed metal ceiling pattern on the interior). A single doorway that opened to the stairway leading to the second floor has been removed. Access from the east facade is through a pair of wooden doors 3'0" x 8'0" with plate glass lites and a two part semicircular arched transom above. From the north a pair of wooden doors 3'0" x 8'0" open to the rear of the building.

- b. Windows: The Commerce Street elevation ground floor openings are steel and glass storefront construction, 12'-0" x 10'0". Windows on the east elevation at the ground floor are pairs of 3'0" x 7'0" double-hung wood sash, one over one with a semicircular 2 lite transom above. At the rear of the building the windows are 3'0" x 7'0" double-hung wood sash, one over one windows with transoms above. On the upper floors the typical window is a 3'0" x 7'0" double-hung, wood sash one over one in a brick opening with segmental arch head. At the third floor the typical window opens behind a semi-circular arched head. The windows in the small central bay on the Commerce Street elevation are 3'0" x 5'0" double-hung wood sash, two over two with a 3'0" x 2'0", two pane transoms above. On the rear elevation windows at the bathrooms are 3'0" x 5'0", double hung wood sash, one over one.

7. Roof

- a. Shape, covering: The roof is a simple slope, falling gradually from the front to back approximately 3'0" with a slight ridge between the parapet and the light well. The roof is covered with composition rolled roofing.
- b. Cornice: The front elevation and one bay of the east elevation are topped by a detailed, profiled corbeled brick parapet with limestone coping. Above the central bay there is a limestone plaque with the inscription "FAIRMOUNT" and a sculptured limestone pediment with anthemion. Each corner of the parapet has a single brick masonry battlement with limestone coping.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor Plans

- a. Cellar: There is a cellar, the full dimension of the building, with a dirt floor and unfinished walls and ceiling.
- b. First Floor: It is an open space, defined by cast iron columns. The stair leading from the exterior to the second floor bisects the front bay. In the rear of the floor, west of center, are two rows of cast iron columns supporting the light well above and gabled skylight at the ceiling.

- c. Second and Third Floor: There are a series of rooms down a single loaded corridor on the west side and a double loaded corridor on the east side of the light well. There is a central lobby space on each floor and common bathroom facilities at the end of each corridor. A double room suite, with bath, is located on either side of the small central bay in the front of the building.
2. Stairways: The stair from the street is partially enclosed with one intermediate landing and 7" x 11" steps. The stair from the second floor to the third floor is an open well with a landing at mid-flight and 7½" x 10½" steps. Both stairs are of wood construction with square newell posts and turned picket balusters.
3. Flooring: The flooring throughout is 1 x 4 tongue and groove pine. The foyers on the second and third floors are covered with linoleum and the corridors have linoleum runners. Some rooms have linoleum rugs.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls are all of plaster on sawn lath. The ceiling on the first floor is of pressed metal with a pressed metal cove. On the second and third floor the ceilings are of plaster.
5. Doorways and doors: Typical doors on the second and third floors are 3'0" x 7'0" wood, divided into five equal horizontal panels. There are operable glass transoms, 3'0" x 1'10", above each door. The trim is typically 5½" wide.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Early Views: The Library of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas at the Alamo, San Antonio, Texas.
  1. Aerial drawing by Augustus Koch and the Sanborn Maps, 1888.
  2. Photograph (date unknown), southeast corner of building.
- B. Bibliography
  1. Primary and unpublished sources.

Bexar County Deed Books and Probate Records, Bexar County Courthouse, San Antonio, Texas.

City of San Antonio Directories, 1897 to Present, San Antonio Public Library.



Dielmann, Leo M. J. "Dielmann's Review." Unpublished pamphlet, The Daughters of the Republic of Texas at the Alamo, San Antonio, Texas.

Fairmount Vertical File. San Antonio Conservation Society, San Antonio, Texas.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Davis, Ellis and Grope, Edwin, ed., "J. P. Haynes." The New Encyclopedia of Texans, 1930, Vol. I, 729.

Jose Luis Hernandez/Architects, Inc. and Reus & Speegle, Inc., "Historical and Architectural Assessment-La Plaza del Rio," Urban Development Action Grant Development Project, City of San Antonio, Texas, 1982.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by Alamo Architects in August, 1984. Project Supervisors were Irby Hightower, Michael L. Lanford, and Bobby Michael McGlone. The photography was executed by Louis Hoffman, Photographer.